

**U.S. Embassy
Havana, Cuba
Message for U.S. Citizens – Traffic Accidents and Road Safety
June 27, 2013**

This message is to alert U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Cuba about an increase in traffic accidents involving U.S. citizens in Cuba. During recent months, two U.S. citizens were jailed for accident-related offenses, two more remain on house arrest, and three others were detained and are now unable to leave the country due to traffic accident-related offenses. We remind U.S. citizens in Cuba of the following information from our [Country Specific Information for Cuba](#):

Unconfirmed reports suggest that accidents involving motor vehicles are now the leading cause of accidental death in Cuba. Many accidents involve motorists striking pedestrians or bicyclists. **Drivers involved in accidents resulting in serious injury or death are subject to prison terms of up to 10 years, and Cuban authorities may prohibit drivers of rental cars who are involved in accidents from leaving the country until all claims associated with an accident are settled.** Witnesses to vehicular accidents may not be permitted to leave Cuba until an investigation into the accident has been completed.

Drivers should exercise extreme care at all times in Cuba. Although the main arteries of Havana are generally well-maintained, secondary streets often are not. Many roads and city streets are unlit, making night driving dangerous, especially as some cars and most bicycles lack running lights or reflectors. Street signage tends to be insufficient and confusing. Many Cuban cars are old, in poor condition, and lack turn signals and other standard safety equipment.

The principal Cuban east-west highway is in good condition, but it lacks lights and extends only part of the way from Havana to the eastern tip of the island. Night driving should be strictly avoided outside urban areas. Secondary rural roads are narrow, and some are in such bad condition as to be impassable by cars. On rural roads, pedestrians, bicycles, horse-drawn carts, and farm equipment may operate without regard to possible automobile traffic. Unfenced livestock constitute another serious road hazard.

Rental car agencies often provide roadside assistance to their clients as a condition of the rental contract, but Cuban authorities may prohibit drivers of rental cars who are involved in accidents from leaving the country, even if they are injured and require medical evacuation, until all claims associated with an accident are settled.

We urge you to take extra safety precautions when driving to avoid problems during your stay in Cuba. Additional information is available at our [Road Safety Overseas](#) page.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Cuba enroll in the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). STEP enrollment gives you

the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Regularly monitor the State [Department's website](#), where you can find current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution. Read the [Country Specific Information for Cuba](#). For additional information, refer to "[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)" on the State Department's website

Contact the U.S. Interests Section for up-to-date information on travel restrictions. You may also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except [U.S. federal holidays](#)). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). You can also download our free Smart Traveler app, available through the [iTunes](#) store and the [Google Play](#) store, for travel information at your fingertips.

The U.S. Embassy is located at

Address: Calzada between L and M Streets, Vedado, Havana

Telephone: (53)(7)-839-4100

For after hours emergencies, please call the main switchboard at (+53)(7) 839-4100 and dial 1 to speak with the emergency operator.